

Haywood Road Vision Plan (draft)

7/10/2012

INTRODUCTION

For the past decade Haywood Road has seen an upsurge in investment and renovation of many of the historic buildings along with new business startups by local residents. During this period west Asheville has also enjoyed an influx of younger families drawn by the high quality of life, a large stock of well-built and affordable housing and convenient access to city-wide services with plenty of options to live, work and play close to home. In response to this resurgence of west Asheville, local residents, business owners and City staff began meeting to discuss the successes of Haywood Road and also opportunities for improvement. At these meetings people naturally made a comparison between west Asheville and downtown Asheville with its successful growth in vitality, new businesses and in places, renovated streetscapes. Meeting attendees began to discuss the potential for streetscape and pedestrian improvements along Haywood Road to strengthen the positive changes being experienced in the neighborhood. In addition to these things the existing zoning along the corridor was studied to see if it is in-line with the expectations for future development and vitality.

Due to an increase in development review functions and other priorities such as the Downtown Master Plan and the Merrimon Avenue Zoning Study, staff time was diverted away from completing the Haywood Road discussions in the mid-2000s. After the Downtown Master Plan was adopted in 2009 and the subsequent changes to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) were completed, planning for Haywood Road began again in earnest. The zoning in place for downtown Asheville is the Central Business District (CBD) zone and that designation is shared in two areas of west Asheville covering about 60 parcels and totaling 18 acres. The Downtown Master Plan indirectly required that a distinction be made between the downtown CBD locations and two smaller west Asheville CBD areas. The scale of new construction in the downtown area should be larger than in west Asheville but this difference was not reflected in the existing zoning. In 2010 staff began to meet again with the Haywood Road study group to discuss appropriate height and other development potential for the CBD areas in west Asheville. Eventually changes to the CBD zoning regulations were adopted in 2010 by City Council and this reenergized the discussion for the remainder of the corridor and for developing a more complete *Vision Plan* for Haywood Road.

West Asheville has always been an important area for small locally-owned businesses and contains strong neighborhoods that foster an active lifestyle because of their compactness. As was noted before, west Asheville has become a neighborhood of choice for many young people who are putting down roots in the community. According to the 2010 census data the median age is 34 for the 4 census tracts that make up the areas around Haywood Road compared to the median age of 38 for the City as a whole. Over time these new residents have started new businesses and restaurants primarily serving the local community. Artists have come to west Asheville from other parts of the city such as downtown to open studio space where the rent is more affordable. Many long term businesses have remained strong too and have found new

customers for their services which include barber shops, retail stores and other neighborhood services.

The Vision Plan has focused on several subject areas that were identified through a series of community meetings held several years ago and reaffirmed in more recent planning sessions. Each subject received comment, research and where appropriate was included in the development preference survey conducted in 2011. Each one of these subject areas will be a separate section in the Vision Plan and will have a list of action and implementation items for follow up:

Streetscape and Transportation Issues

Zoning and Land Use and Community Character

Economic Development Issues

Historic Preservation

Safety

Neighborhood Related Issues

Special Statement: Sustainability as a guiding principle of the Vision Plan

Sustainability is a growing national trend that the City of Asheville has highlighted through a number of adopted plans and goals. This interest is mirrored in west Asheville through the attitudes and actions of residents in support of plans such as the Pedestrian Thoroughfare Plan (year adopted), the Bicycle Plan (year adopted), the Sustainability Plan (year adopted), the Parks and Greenways Plan (year adopted), Transportation Plan (adopted) among many others. The sustainability goals adopted city-wide by the City Council have struck a particular chord in west Asheville. Time and again participants in community meetings have stated that a core community value going forward is sustainability and this goal should inform and direct all decisions being made for the corridor now and in the future. Sustainability is often defined as managing and developing resources that meet the needs of the current population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A key principle of sustainability is that the status quo is changing from an energy and economic standpoint and that communities need to respond to the way development and consumerism is carried out by treating resources as finite and in need of conservation. Sustainability means many things depending on the particular topic. For example sustainability from the perspective of energy consumption means incorporating renewable energy sources and energy conservation as mainstream concepts. Sustainability from a land use and transportation approach means allowing for compact growth and greater residential density in corridor areas that includes a variety of residential units (condominiums, townhomes, apartments for example). This is related to planning for the transportation needs and energy consumption by the community. Compact development patterns have been the subject of a recent study that looked at household energy use based on home type, distance to destinations, green building practices and transit oriented development. This national study shows that housing located close to corridors that offered a variety of transportation options and projects that are multi-family or attached homes use the least amount of energy on a yearly basis as compared to suburban style single family counterparts. Compact development supports greater transportation options such as public transportation, biking and of course walking. Sustainability also has a natural overlap with

environmental issues too. It can mean thinking of complete natural systems in a multi-dimensional way even in developed areas so that natural systems can not only be maintained but enhanced. This may include mimicking natural systems for water infiltration and pollution removal for storm water running through parking lots or planting trees and shrubs that provide habitat for animals or food for people. Sustainability can also be part of the City's day to day operations such as street light conversions from traditional lighting sources to LED lighting to save energy and expansion of the residential recycling program. West Asheville has the opportunity to be a neighborhood leader for sustainability in the city since the area is compact and meets many of the definitions of sustainability. Community Investment will be needed over time for things like streetscape improvements, multi-modal transportation facilities, and additional greenspace. It is with this overall goal, sustainability that discussions for each of the plan's subject headings were carried out.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

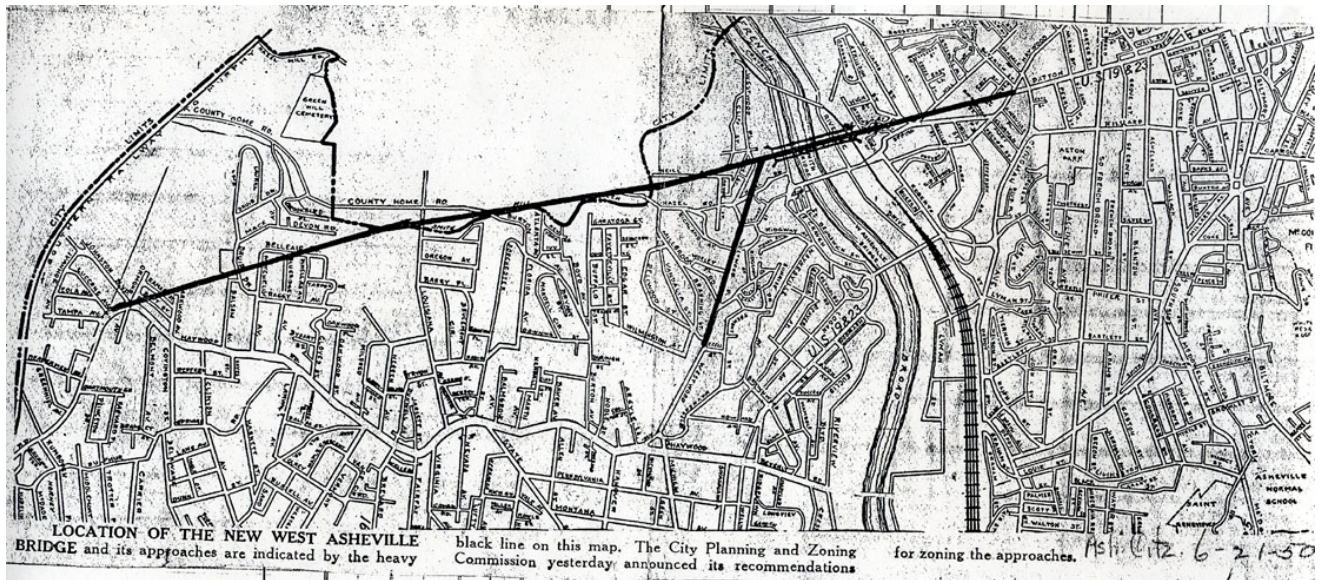
The Haywood Road Vision Plan focuses on the 2.5 mile section of roadway beginning at the French Broad River and winding its way through West Asheville containing a variety of neighborhoods and commercial areas to its intersection with Patton Avenue. West Asheville was originally its own town that was chartered in the 1890's and soon after was dissolved and then re-chartered again in 1913. In 1917 the citizens voted to join the City of Asheville. Haywood Road includes parts of two historic trading routes; one was a dirt road trading-path that served points west after crossing the French Broad River at the old Smith Bridge (now the Craven Street Bridge) and followed the route of Westwood Place after climbing a number of switchbacks that were needed to traverse the steep terrain. Later Haywood Road followed a new alignment over what is now Waynesville Avenue which was an improvement over the steep grades of the original route. About 1920, Haywood was again aligned with a newer bridge near the location of today's Riverlink Bridge when it connected to the first street car line that ran between Pack Square and the 600 block of Haywood Road. The street car line needed a straight evenly graded roadway so that the street cars could make the climb to Beecham's Curve; from there it followed a new street section called Asheville Avenue until it met up with the older section of Haywood Road at Waynesville Avenue. Haywood Road has served as the main *commercial* street for the community starting with the trading route days, during the time the Town of West Asheville was incorporated and later as new residential neighborhoods were developed along the roadway. There are a number of good reference sources covering the history of west Asheville and the healthful Sulphur Springs and the first inn built around it (in the 1860's). Sulphur Springs became one of the early destinations that made Asheville a tourist stop and encouraged the nascent tourism industry that has expanded with time to be one of the important economic engines of the entire community. Haywood Road has a broad range of early 20th century commercial structures that served the community needs such as banking, churches, a post office (two locations) and retail shopping and services. These historic structures are a part of the character that inspires many residents and has anchored so much reinvestment in the community. The residential neighborhoods surrounding Haywood Road have their own strong character defined by a large number of simple but classic bungalow houses. Since about 2000 new infill houses have been built on vacant or subdivided residential

property. New construction for commercial buildings has been limited on Haywood Road except for a large number of existing commercial properties that have been renovated for new uses. This trend of residential infill and renovation and new construction of commercial buildings is expected to resume and expand as development interest picks up again and the economy strengthens in the coming years. The form and scale of new development and other issues surrounding the Haywood Road Corridor have been researched to develop the Vision Plan.

Transportation and Streetscape Issues

Background

Haywood Road is a busy collector roadway that serves as a 'main street' for the community. This is a role it has served for over a century since the beginning of development on the west side of the French Broad River. In the early days the road was a dirt trading path known as the Western Turnpike that linked Asheville with Waynesville in Haywood County. Over time it became a State Road (S.R.) 19 -23 and intersected with the road to Brevard NC later known as S.R. 191. Over many years the roadway was widened to carry an ever increasing numbers of vehicles. Sidewalks were added on both sides of the street for most of the length from the French Broad River to Patton Avenue. In the 1950's the Smokey Park Bridge was built and Patton Avenue was laid out along its current alignment as a new 'bypass' road. With time, Patton Avenue became the dominant road for car-oriented businesses and for the large box stores that developed from the 1960's onward. (A box store is a common name for a commercial use often a chain-type of business that utilizes a simple box style of architecture). Some businesses left Haywood Road to locate along Patton Avenue because of the higher traffic volume. Another project, the expansion of 19-23 further divided and affected west Asheville by severing it north to south so that there is an 'east-west Asheville' nearest the river and a larger section of west Asheville west of 19-23. These roadways, 19-23, Patton Avenue and the French Broad River define the primary edges of the community and provide part of its character. In some ways the Patton Avenue 'bypass' construction saved Haywood Road from additional widening projects that were so common on many roads around Asheville and allowed the community to maintain its historic character. As a contrast to Haywood Road, Merrimon Avenue is a local roadway that has been widened over time to 4 lanes. The larger scale and faster operational speed along Merrimon has affected its ability to be developed in a *pedestrian-friendly* format. Haywood Road has retained more of its original scale and has community support to strengthen its place as a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district. It is on this historic roadway that the community now thrives and seeks its future potential.



Original insert to the Asheville Citizen newspaper 6-21-1950 illustrating the proposed extension of Patton Avenue from downtown Asheville across the new Smokey Park Bridge into west Asheville. Note how Westwood Place originally connected directly to Patton Avenue before the 19-23 interchange was constructed.

Recent Transportation Efforts

In the mid 2000's the City of Asheville along with the NC Department of Transportation after conducting a number of community informational meetings, repaved and re-striped Haywood Road, reduced travel speeds and designated many on-street parking spaces. In some areas there were informal but customary parking spaces that were striped and in other areas new spaces were added. The number of lanes was generally reduced down to two lanes from three lanes with a turning lane added at key intersections. The speed limits along the road were also reduced to 20 miles per hour. The restriping project has generally worked well and traffic moves more efficiently at slower speeds and pedestrian activity has expanded along the corridor. This type of project known informally as a 'lane diet' could also be applied to the section of Haywood Road between Michigan Avenue and Wellington Street. There the central turn lane is sometimes used as a parking area for large trucks making deliveries to area businesses. The corridor study group has expressed concern about this type of activity and the confusion it can cause for drivers passing through the area. Other sections of roadway especially towards the western end would benefit from slower travel speeds and a lane diet by adding bike lanes and on-street parking spaces to benefit businesses operating in that area. Any roadway changes will have to be coordinated with the NC Department of Transportation who has jurisdiction over this roadway.

The Asheville Transit System has provided continuous route improvement and has been widely mentioned as a positive presence on the corridor. The Asheville Transit system known as ART (Asheville Redefines Transit) operates two routes along Haywood Road and is one of the most popular areas for bus ridership in the city. The number of riders along these two routes has been growing for years such that between the years of 2000 until 2010, for example ridership increased XX% to XXX passengers per year. This growth trend is expected to continue. In the long term, the transit system is seeking to provide 30 minute coverage to enhance service for

the majority of the road which along with improved bus stops, is expected to increase ridership. A bus hub will be located along Haywood Road so that riders can switch buses for a different route serving west area locations. This hub is one of several planned for the transit system. Aligning with complete streets goals and efforts, bicycle ridership is also growing and facilities for bike riders have actively been requested. Improvements to more formally and consistently accommodate bike riders could require additional changes to the roadway lane layout and restriping.

Street 1	Street 2	Year	Time	Pedestrians	Bicycle
Haywood Road	Craven	2009	PM	14	27
Haywood Road	I-240	2010	PM	58	50
Haywood Road	Patton / Smoky Park Hwy	2009	PM	27	17
Haywood Road	Vermont (Weekday AM)	2009	AM	76	14
Haywood Road	Vermont	2009	PM	205	32
Haywood Road	Vermont (Sat AM)	2009	Sat AM	194	47

The chart above shows the annual pedestrian and bicycle counts at the noted intersections. The counts were taken at two-hour periods usually in the Fall. Data was not collected in 2011.

Streetscape and Community Character

The subject of the *streetscape* along Haywood Road has been an important item of discussion during the Vision Plan process. Streetscapes include travel lanes, sidewalk areas, crosswalks and placement of driveway curb cuts, street trees and sidewalk furniture that are placed for use and enjoyment by the public. In addition to the buildings that line the corridor, the streetscape details have the most potential to define in a positive way the character of the community. The best streetscapes reflect the history of an area and make it safe and comfortable for pedestrians to walk to their destination. The specific details of a streetscape plan usually include sidewalks of a specific minimum width, street trees at regular intervals and in high-use pedestrian areas, trash cans and benches. The overhead powerlines are buried to improve the views along some downtown streets years ago. Bus shelters are a part of a streetscape as well and can enhance the character of the area. Special treatments such as banners, flowers and public art can also be components. Streetscapes can be improved a little at a time as special projects when a site is redeveloped or be part of a major redevelopment and rehabilitation of a street. Asheville has been actively improving and creating new streetscapes in downtown for many years. Two major streetscape projects completed in the past 20 years are along Biltmore Avenue and North Lexington Avenue. Both projects were completed with City funds and over time the private sector responded with a large amount of investment by renovating structures and opening new businesses. A pilot streetscape project could be initiated along Haywood Road to inspire other improvements and investment along the corridor. A particular challenge to the existing streetscape today is the large number and configuration of driveway curb-cuts. According to a recent study, 36% of the length of the Haywood Road corridor is broken up by driveway curb-cuts. Some parcels have continuous driveways along the street and these situations are particularly hazardous to pedestrians, bike users and even other drivers because orderly turning movements along the corridor cannot be anticipated. Other contemporary

streets in Asheville have about 25% of the roadway length in driveways (sections of Charlotte Street and Merrimon Avenue were studied). A comprehensive streetscape plan could address the widest driveways to improve the safety and functioning of the roadway by replacing non-standard driveways with narrower City-standard ones.

Complete Streets Policy:

In the transportation and planning fields a new comprehensive planning process known as 'Complete Streets' has emerged on a national level. Complete Streets is largely an engineering policy that, according to the [National Complete Streets Coalition](#) website, "ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind -- including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities." During the growth of the Complete Streets concept, bicycle and transit use have both increased along Haywood Road and there has been more attention given to accommodating these growing modes of travel. Recently Asheville adopted a Complete Streets Policy (June 26, 2012), and prior to this, conversations with participants through the Vision Plan Process have included components of Complete Streets as part of planning for the future. Another positive aspect of the Complete Streets movement is that street improvements need to be designed to respond to the context of the space that is available for renovation or improvement. This practical approach is appropriate in Asheville where there are topographic challenges and limited rights-of-ways in place as compared to other cities. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has officially adopted a Complete Streets Policy (2009) and at least two cities, Charlotte (2009) and Chapel Hill (2012) have followed suit.

Meeting notes pertaining to transportation and streetscape issues:

1. What will traffic growth be like with additional development?
2. Bike lanes are planned for the roadway throughout the corridor
3. On-street parking is important but can be in conflict with bike lanes and bicyclists
4. Back alleys can be useful in providing access
5. Central parking facilities could be helpful;- park and walk to destinations (see economic development goals)
6. Need additional crosswalks and pedestrian lights at important intersections
7. Does the adopted greenway plan include a pathway along Haywood?
8. Time-table for I-26 needs to be better understood
9. Make sidewalks wider depending on context and surrounding uses
10. Bus transfer station along Haywood along with additional shelters will improve ridership
11. Existing buildings along the corridor have a variety of front setbacks some with small front yards. This pattern should be encouraged as a viable option along Haywood Road to maintain some open space and ease urban density.
12. With an improved streetscape design people would be willing to walk further to get to their destination which promotes health, small business, and less energy use.
13. Include opportunities for recycling along the corridor.

14. Expansion of bus service along Haywood Road is noted as a positive change to supporting sustainability.
15. Sidewalks are narrow and in places are obstructed by power poles, signage and curb cuts
16. Overhead powerlines result in visual clutter
17. Streetscape improvements are needed: trash cans, bike racks, trees in tree grates
18. Find places to add green plantings and green space to the corridor
19. Improve the streetscape based on the nearby and adjacent uses
20. Continuous curb cuts create safety concerns for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists
21. Existing buildings along the corridor have a variety of front setbacks some with small front yards. This pattern should be encouraged as a viable option to maintain some open space and ease urban density.

Recommendations and Strategies related to Transportation and Streetscape Issues:

1. Coordinating with the NC DOT, a sidewalk replacement and curb-cut closure project should be undertaken focusing on the longest curb-cuts first and continuing throughout the corridor. (A program to expand the width of sidewalks in places can be coordinated with this effort).
2. Continue strategic placement of bike lanes along the corridor by coordinating with neighboring businesses and bicycle stakeholders while balancing the needs for on-street parking spaces.
3. Stay involved and review plans for the redevelopment of the I-240 bridge and interchange to ensure multi-modal transportation safety.
4. Support efforts to implement a project using the Complete Streets Policy along Haywood Road.
5. Develop a streetscape pallet of details and implement in one or two pilot locations based on the context of the surrounding area to provide a prototype for the corridor.
6. Create a list of crosswalks and pedestrian signals that are needed along the corridor with priorities and strategies for funding.
7. Bring to fruition the plans for a transit hub along Haywood Road to improve service along the corridor.
8. Research grants for opportunities that may fund streetscape improvements as a strategy to leverage private investment along the corridor.

Historic Preservation Topics

West Asheville has a wealth of historic structures many of which are encompassed by the two National Register Districts centered along Haywood Road; the *Aycock School Historic District* (at east-west Asheville) and the *End of the Car Line Historic District*. In addition to the two National Register Districts there are a number of other historic buildings including churches, residential buildings, and commercial buildings which were not included in the historic district boundaries for a variety of reasons such as: isolation from the other intact clusters of commercial buildings, major alterations to the original facades which decreased their historic relevance, or in cases lack of interest by property owners in being included in the national register district.

Many community members are interested in the preservation of existing structures along Haywood Road. According to the results of the recent community survey, people were asked to select from a list of community 'trade-off' preferences that might be used to justify approval of larger or taller-scaled projects which include community-adopted or supported benefits; 62 percent of respondents selected '**Preservation and/or incorporation of historic structures if present on the property**' which was a very close third behind, '**Enhanced pedestrian environment through building design and sidewalk enhancements (66%)**' and '**Publicly accessible open/green space if included as a part of the project (65%)**'. Survey respondents were allowed to select more than one option from an inclusive list of potential community benefits.

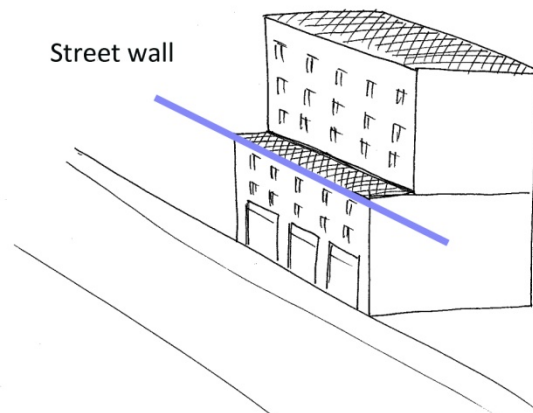
Based on a community meeting additional ideas and goals were shared regarding historic preservation. The group discussed how to encourage the renovation of older structures instead of replacing them which is also consistent with sustainability goals that guide the *Vision Plan*. The buildings that are included in the National Register District areas will be able to apply for tax credits for renovations when they meet *Secretary of the Interior* standards for renovation. This is an important incentive for preservation that has been very successful in inspiring renovations in downtown Asheville and Biltmore Village. Historic structures outside of these two districts do not receive a tax credit for their renovations.

Map image of the two historic districts

If areas along Haywood Road made a further step and became part of a **local** historic district it would operate like other local historic districts in Asheville such as *Biltmore Village Historic District* and *Montford Area Historic District*. Renovations and new construction would be reviewed and approved by the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County. Owners of property receive a 40% NC State tax credit for qualifying renovations in addition to any federal credits that a project may qualify for. The meeting attendees noted that

there is not a strong single building character among the buildings located in the national register districts as compared to Biltmore Village and Montford. A majority of the contributing structures in the two west Asheville districts were built between 1920 and 1950 and are fairly simple commercial structures compared to other areas of the City. It was noted that there could be resistance by property owners to become part of a local historic district because owners would not want to have their building designs meet specific design guidelines and be subject to a review body.

Form-based development rules for new construction may also provide an incentive to renovate and incorporate historic buildings into new development projects. There are many successful examples of this approach which includes regulations to the *form* or scale of new construction to reinforce the existing character of the street. The Central Business District zoning areas of west Asheville and downtown Asheville require a ‘*street wall*’ form as the *base* of a new building (the lower floors) to keep new buildings at an appropriate scale with neighboring buildings by limiting the height experienced at the sidewalk edge. This requirement encourages new construction to maintain some consistency along the street to help make new buildings assimilate with nearby existing buildings. Single story and two-story existing structures can satisfy this street wall requirement which would encourage renovation. Haywood Road with its large current stock of single and two story buildings could easily make use of a new street wall rule for renovations and new construction throughout the length of the corridor.



The streetwall concept included for Central Business District zoned areas ensures compatibility of scale for new buildings as experienced at the sidewalk edge. Existing structures match this requirement already so there is an incentive to renovate and not tear down and replace.

Limiting the front building setbacks will also help preserve historic buildings and is another form-based development standard. Generally new buildings would be placed at the edge of an expanded sidewalk zone to promote the pedestrian environment and eliminate parking lots in front of buildings. There could also be some flexibility to the front setback to incorporate green spaces or small plazas as a part of the streetscape. The older commercial sections of Haywood Road were built with a minimal front setback with a primary entrance and shop-front display windows along the sidewalk. In pedestrian districts around Asheville there are requirements to

construct a storefront using a specific percentage of windows and provide a pedestrian entrance directly from the sidewalk. This traditional style of building is called *commercial style* architecture. There has been a resurgence of commercial style architecture across the country because it supports what many communities are looking for when they are trying to strengthen their pedestrian shopping districts. Since many older buildings in west Asheville already have windows and doors facing the street, this will act as another incentive to renovate and add-on to existing building instead of replacing them. These types of standards along with a roof cap requirement to all buildings improves the pedestrian experience along the street and will serve to protect historic resources.

Meeting notes pertaining to historic preservation:

Historic Structures-

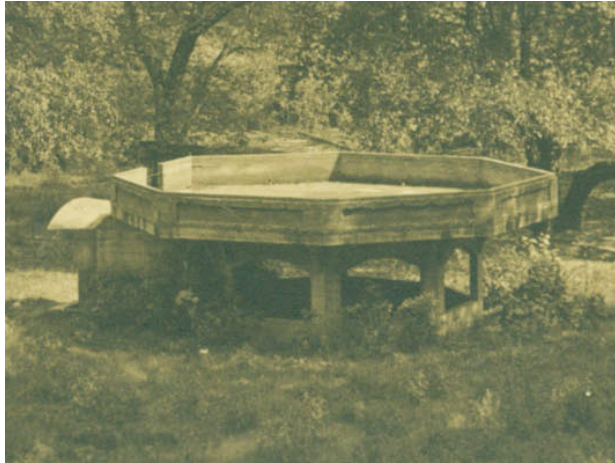
1. Create an inventory for buildings in poor repair which might be threatened with demolition due to neglect and lack of maintenance
2. Pursue façade restoration initiatives which could include low interest loans or grants to renovate existing buildings
3. Provide an inventory of the areas outside of the 2 listed historic districts to note other structures and housing stock to emphasize their importance.
4. Identify all of the special buildings in the neighborhood.
5. Require that demolition permits be reviewed; they may be reviewed already with the approval of conditional zoning approvals; identify other options to review proposed demolitions.
6. Encouraging renovation of older structures instead of replacing them and properly maintaining them to protect them from demolition from neglect.
7. Façade restoration initiatives to preserve historic buildings which could be through low interest loans in a revolving loan program.

Cultural Resources-

8. Story telling sessions to capture the history of the community (make available on 'youtube' or the 'History Portal' being developed for Asheville)
9. Create a Haywood Road history trail- featuring art, local stories; along Haywood and the old trading roads through w Asheville including Waynesville Avenue-Haywood-Sand Hill Roadway segments as the original community roads
10. Research if there is a historic west Asheville symbol- from old town days that could be used as a symbol for west Asheville history.
11. Initiate a neighborhood-wide program to encourage researching the origins of a home and posting the date on the porch
12. Provide small special signage noting the historic districts along Haywood Road
13. Consider cultural sustainability which includes the aspects of local history and preservation of buildings, sites and relics of the past.

Other Ideas-

14. Emphasize the link between sustainability and historic preservation in discussions, publications, etc.
15. Provide public information and notification of the NC State rehabilitation credits of 10% for any structures over 50 years old.
16. With new zoning rules, specify a minimum window requirement and forbid spandrel glass (non-transparent glass used in wall systems) as a new standard
17. Community Identification Welcome sign on the west end of Haywood Road near Patton Avenue; placed on private property (on former Rush Fitness site?)



The structure of the Sulphur Springs Pavilion as it looked about 1920 and in its current condition, covered in vines and damaged but still standing in 2011 (Photo Credit: Steve Rasmussen, 2011)

Special effort to protect the Sulphur Springs Pavilion- An additional initiative attempting to preserve the old pavilion structure that was a part of the Sulphur Springs Hotel was discussed with some detail among the Vision Plan Steering Committee. Even though the Sulphur Springs are not located directly along the corridor it had an important impact on the historic development in west Asheville and brought people to the area to enjoy the healthful springs. This placed Asheville as a tourism destination and was one of the first local attractions for visitors from outside the area. (more detail about the springs and inn) The areas around the spring and inn that was later built have changed a lot with new housing development replacing the resort's grounds. The old pavilion structure could be saved and restored to some extent and the area made into a small park. There is interest among west Asheville neighbors to link this site with new greenways along the nearby stream corridors as well. Local residents are pursuing meeting with the owners of the property and providing a presentation to see if there is interest in parting with the property and providing it as a donation to the City or other property holder.

Recommendations and Strategies:

1. As zoning regulations are updated based on recommendations from the plan, incorporate historic preservation goals as a 'trade-off' for approval of a development proposal.
2. Consider local 'landmarking' of historic properties to preserve the stories and places of west Asheville.
3. Develop a west Asheville history trail similar to the urban trail in downtown Asheville
4. Support the efforts to create a web-based history portal to highlight the stories and places of west Asheville.
5. Create a database of historic properties that may be demolished due to lack of maintenance and neglect and develop strategies to stabilize / redevelop them.
6. Support the two local historic districts by using special signage designating the areas.
7. Pursue façade restoration initiatives to preserve historic buildings which may be through low-interest loans in a revolving loan program.
8. Provide a building inventory of the areas outside of the 2 listed historic districts to note other structures and housing stock to emphasize their importance. Historic plaques could be used to share notable events and dates of buildings, etc.
9. Ensure that any additional building standards and regulations allow and encourage the preservation of existing historic structures
10. Working with property owners to pursue the transfer and protection of the Sulphur Springs property and identify ways and funding to restore the site .

Zoning and Land Use Issues

Some of the most discussed topics during the vision plan process were land uses and appropriate scale of new buildings. This section covers: uses of land, existing zoning, building scale, community supported development incentives, height, special design requirements to support pedestrian districts. To support these topics a community preference survey was completed in the Fall of 2011 which focused on preferences for development and land uses along the corridor. It will be reviewed and compared with the survey that was completed in 2006 which asked similar questions.

Characteristics of the corridor:

Haywood Road is a commercial corridor that has served as the main street for west Asheville, beginning at the French Broad River and continuing for two and half miles to Patton Avenue. The commercial area is often just one parcel deep and is surrounded by residential uses in many cases separated by a fenced back yard. Haywood Road consistently has two travel lanes with a turning lane located at key intersections. In places there are alternating areas marked for on-street parking and bike lanes are striped in some areas. There are long stretches of sidewalk with access on both sides of the street in most locations. Historically the corridor had two specific areas with a high concentration of commercial buildings containing a firehouse, bank, mercantile buildings and the community post office. Not all of the structures are two

stories in these areas but there is a concentration of them. The first more densely developed area is located in the vicinity of Haywood Road, Waynesville Avenue and Richmond Avenue. Further west along the corridor, the second area is larger and is located at Haywood Road, Sand Hill Road, Vermont Avenue and Brevard Road. This specific area in many people's mind captures the essential character of west Asheville.

Hold for a photo of the Bledsoe Building:

The Bledsoe Building was renovated around 2001 and is cited most often as the center of west Asheville redevelopment. It has been mentioned as a positive model for future development and new construction in west Asheville. In the preference survey conducted in 2011, the Bledsoe was mentioned 58 times, The Village on Haywood (the former St. Joan of Arc Church) was mentioned 27 times and the Universal Joint renovation was listed 23 times. The results of the 2006 survey were similar and the Bledsoe Building being noted or described 60 times and the West End Bakery and Sunny Point being listed for a close second and third. The two National Register Historic Districts noted earlier ('Aycok School' and the 'End of the Car Line') correspond with these two denser commercial areas. Between these areas is a mix of commercial uses occupying older commercial structures and residential homes. The other defining characteristic along Haywood Road is the large number of churches that line the street. The churches are generally the largest structures along the corridor considering their height and size of the buildings. Most of the existing house structures are used commercially now or have been converted into apartments. There are still single family uses in the area closest to the French Broad River and the steep undeveloped parcels located in this section might best be retained for residential use since commercial development will be difficult there. Aside from renovations of existing buildings which are quite numerous, there have only been two new commercial structures built along Haywood Road in the last 10 years: the Organic Mechanic and Building One of the Village on Haywood located at 915 Haywood Road. Close to Haywood Road there has been a new development of townhomes and condominiums at 15 State Street totaling 8 units but few other additional residential multi-family developments have occurred. Throughout the various west Asheville neighborhoods, a large number of single family homes have been built on vacant lots over the past decade (*looking for figures on this if possible*). In spite of the limited commercial construction in the recent past, the expectation is that when the economy expands again, interest in commercial construction will be strong along Haywood Road. At this point the scale of any new development is difficult to predict and for this reason minimum development standards and maximum standards should be contemplated to cover either scenario. Under-building on a site can be as challenging to the community as over-building since it represents a missed economic opportunity to invest in the potential of the community and strengthen the tax base. After the Vision Plan study is complete, it is contemplated that changes to development requirements in the UDO will follow based on the direction provided by this plan.

Existing Zoning Districts and their features:

There are six categories of existing zoning along the corridor. The most numerous type is the Community Business II zone totaling about 76 acres in size made up of 203 parcels. The least numerous is the Urban Place zoning which covers a single parcel for the *Village on Haywood* project that was approved under a specific development plan as a 'conditional zoning'. The descriptions for each existing zoning district follows:

Zoning Type	Number of Parcels	Number of Acres
Community Business II (CB II)	203	76
Highway Business (HB)	28	22.4
Central Business District (CBD)	79	18.4
Institutional (INST)	13	13.6
Urban Place (UP)	1	3.5
Residential Multi-family Medium (RM-8_	3	2.4

Community Business II (CB II) is the most numerous zoning district in terms of area and number of parcels and totals about 76 acres. The Community Business II zone is a widely used zoning district for corridors throughout Asheville. It supports a wide range of commercial, institutional and residential uses and is used where negative impacts from commercial activity on the residential areas can be minimized. There are no specific building design standards except that parking may not occur between the building itself and the front of the lot. Parking is allowed only to the side or rear of the main structure. This has the positive effect of reducing the sidewalk curb cuts when new site plans are proposed and encouraging new buildings to take advantage of pedestrian traffic along the street by being adjacent to the sidewalk. Along the corridor there are some non-conforming structures that have parking in front of the main building but the majority comply with the standard. For buildings in the CB II district, there are no specific requirements to provide windows, doors or other architectural details on the façade of new buildings which is one of its weaknesses since a pedestrian environment has emerged as a goal. Also of note is that there is *not* a two-story building requirement for new construction. A two-story minimum in many circumstances is a good idea because it encourages more development diversity on a parcel with space above the first floor that can be put to office or residential uses. During the zoning preferences survey that was recently completed 2011, 73% of respondents noted they support a two-story requirement for new construction and a similar result was obtained during the 2006 survey when 68% supported this requirement. The CB II district has a 45,000 square foot maximum size for new structures with height allowances of 40 feet (roughly 4 stories). Depending on the specific site constraints, more than a single building could be built on a parcel.

The **Central Business District (CBD)** is made up of two separate zoning areas totaling 18.4 acres; one on the east end of Haywood Road at Waynesville Avenue and the other larger area at

Haywood Road and Sandhill-Brevard Roads. The zoning for the CBD areas was most recently updated in 2010 in response to a community meeting process that came with the adoption of the Downtown Master Plan (DMP). The downtown area is zoned CBD and before the adoption of the DMP, all areas of CBD had identical zoning. Since the master plan for downtown was adopted, the development requirements of the west Asheville area CBDs were reviewed with community and stakeholder input. The district has a well defined set of building and lot orientation requirements in order to ensure an urban style of development that encourages pedestrian orientation and design. There is generally a zero setback from the ROW line and defined requirements for windows and requirements to reflect the heights of neighboring buildings. Two-story buildings are required in this district and this has been a CBD requirement for almost a decade. There is also a maximum building height which would allow a six or seven-story building such that the height may not exceed the threshold for 'highrise' structures set in the NC State Building Code. The height of the highest living space, the roof space and mechanical penthouse areas may not exceed 30 additional feet. While there is no off-street parking requirements in the CBD, when parking is provided on site it is required to be at the side or rear of the main structure. There are 10 properties among the 79 CBD parcels that have non-conforming parking areas because they are located in front of the building. The CBD zoned areas along Haywood Road were some of the first areas to be renovated and now provide residential units and office space on the second floor. There has been a positive ripple effect to the other areas of the corridor since the first large-scale renovations of existing buildings occurred starting around the year 2000.

Institutional zoning has been applied to about 13.6 acres in two locations along the corridor. The institutional zoned parts of the corridor have uses that might be expected because of the self-descriptive name; a child enrichment center in a former school, a church, a library and a fire and police station and recreation center located below the station. Because there is no private commercial property zoned Institutional there has been little focus on these properties. If at some time the properties were sold off to private developers, a rezoning process could be contemplated to change the classification of the properties to be consistent with the greater number of commercial properties along the corridor. The height of Institutional buildings is not limited unless it is within 100 feet of residentially zoned properties in which case the height is limited to 40 feet for the portions of the buildings within the 100' buffer area. Besides meeting building setbacks or height, there is no maximum size limit for buildings located in the Institutional District.

Highway Business (HB) zoning is located on the Patton Avenue end of Haywood Road and totals about 22 acres. This district is characterized by the potential for large scale commercial development. The list of commercial uses allowed in HB is extensive because few impacts are expected since the placement of this district is usually along high traffic corridors. Besides providing a location for a wide range and scale of commercial development, efficient functioning of the thoroughfare is ensured through site design and limitations on the number and size of curb-cuts. High density residential uses are also allowed in this district so essentially the Highway Business zone can function as a mixed-use district. Structures with a single tenant

use are limited to 100,000 square feet. Multi-tenant developments are encouraged in this district on a single site and can exceed the size of single tenant structures.

Urban Place Conditional Zone (UP CZ) has been applied to a single parcel of land located along Haywood Road between Blue Ridge Avenue and Mitchell Avenue totaling 3.54 acres. The property was rezoned to urban place to allow a mixed-use development with commercial buildings and a mix residential structures on a single parcel. The developer held a number of workshops to communicate with the neighborhood about the plans which were eventually approved by City Council. Projects with the Urban Place designation are required to provide a high level of building articulation and a mix of uses encouraging pedestrian activity.

Residential Multi-family Medium Density (RM-8) is located on parcels close to the French Broad River which are steeper than some of the surrounding commercial lots. The total area is over 2 acres. There are other parcels in the same area that are commercially zoned now which may be more suitable for residential uses since the lots are steeply sloping and in some cases have limited lot widths.

Building Scale and other issues considered as a part of the 2011 Vision Plan Survey

To many people in west Asheville, the size and scale of new buildings is an important issue and new construction should honor the existing character of the corridor. When it comes to new construction, what is allowed ‘by right’ becomes an important consideration (‘by right’ development means that if someone follows the rules defined in the City ordinance they have a clear direct path for project approval). Sometimes larger projects that exceed a *community-defined* development threshold may be required to seek a special approval which includes a public hearing process. During this process, community identified goals are often included as a part of the proposal and are a factor in approval of the project. In the CBD zoned areas details of the scale and heights for new construction have been reviewed earlier in this report. The form of all of the new buildings outside of the CBD zones could have similar requirements such as: pedestrian level windows, doors and other openings; a street wall defining the building height at the street; defined building roof cap; a change of materials between the ground level and upper floors; enhancements to the streetscape, and outside dining spaces or plazas.

Scale of Existing Buildings along Haywood Road:

Existing Building/ Development	Scale of Building/ Development
West Asheville Baptist	70,000 square feet
Builder’s First Source	63,000 square feet (under roof)
Ingles Markets	34,000 square feet
Grace Baptist	34,000 square feet
Trinity Methodist	31,000 square feet
Bledsoe Building	27,000 square feet
River of Life Church	19,000 square feet
Old Ingles / former Rush	13,200 square feet
915 Haywood/ Haywood Village (first building)	12,000 square feet
O’Reilly’s Auto Parts	10,100 square feet

Fortune Building	9,900 square feet
Family Dollar	9,700 square feet
Salvation Army	4,300 square feet

The Vision Plan preference survey asked what would be appropriate for new development and renovations along the corridor.

Sustainably built commercial areas provide a more efficient form of land use that conserves energy, improves walkability, strengthens the tax base, allows more efficient delivery of city services and efficient use of existing community infrastructure compared to lower density single-family housing areas in the city. If Haywood Road was developed using a more sustainable development pattern with a mix of businesses and housing (also known as mixed-use development) this would provide many of these benefits and in addition could strengthen community bonds, provide residential growth to support transit use and create pedestrian-friendly destinations. Question: Would you support sustainable development along Haywood Road in order to improve the tax base and provide other community enhancements?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I support sustainable development.	85.6%	489
No, I do not support sustainable development.	1.6%	9
This is not my vision for sustainable development.	12.8%	73
<i>answered question</i>		571
<i>skipped question</i>		29

This question above, Question 3 of the survey is useful because it invited the survey taker to envision a 'big picture' concept using ideas that people can understand and relate to. Requiring some mixed-use / sustainable concepts in the ordinance to direct new development to meet community adopted goals has support in the community.

The next question, Question 4 asks preferences about height:

Some people are concerned about building heights sometimes because of compatibility concerns with the surrounding neighborhood. Please note that the two areas of Central Business District (CBD) zoning already allow 6-story buildings by ordinance and all other commercial districts on the corridor permit 3-story buildings. (Zoning maps area available at www.ashevillenc.gov/progress and clicking on the Haywood Road Vision Plan link.) Please select the following preferences for new buildings along Haywood Road outside of the CBD sections (you may check more than one):

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Nothing over two stories should be allowed	21.5%	115
Four-story buildings should be permitted along the corridor	21.3%	114
Four-story buildings should be permitted but only with City Council approval	29.6%	158
Four-story buildings should not be allowed	11.4%	61
Buildings taller than four stories should be permitted.	4.7%	25
Buildings taller than four stories should be permitted but only with City Council approval.	13.1%	70
Buildings taller than four stores should not be allowed.	30.0%	160
Taller buildings should be allowed but only at strategic locations.	24.2%	129
answered question		534
skipped question		66

Based on the answers to the question, the community consensus seems to be that for areas outside of the CBD zones, four-story buildings should be considered but the approval should be reserved by City Council. However 21.5 % of survey takers, feel that nothing over two-stories should be allowed and a smaller minority (11.4%) said that four-story buildings should not be allowed.

The existing zoning in place along the corridor (outside of the CBD areas) allows 3-story buildings *by right*. The question to allow larger structures along the corridor has received careful consideration through the Vision Plan process. Sometimes projects are approved that may be larger than normally permitted by right if the project provides community identified and supported goals . This was the scenario for approval of the Pioneer Building on Broadway in 2004. Community goals can allow City Council to carefully review a specific proposal and approve it if they feel that the community character is enhanced and city goals are promoted with the new development. The next survey question reviews community goals in some detail:

In the past considerations by the community, three-story buildings were generally accepted as compatible along Haywood Road. In some circumstances, larger structures and additional height may be approved as a trade-off for projects implementing community identified goals from adopted plans. Question: Would you be supportive of allowing additional building size or building height if the proposal was assisting the community's identified goals? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Providing affordable housing	42.6%	224
Meeting sustainable building goals such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) eligible construction.	54.2%	285
Publicly accessible open/green space if included as a part of the project.	64.8%	341
Enhanced pedestrian environment through building design and sidewalk enhancements.	66.0%	347
Preservation and/or incorporation of historic structures if present on the property.	62.5%	329
Higher residential density to support the public transit system, small businesses, and public safety.	36.5%	192
Mixed-use development included in the proposal.	43.2%	227
Business incubation space included in the proposal.	23.8%	125
None of these community goals should be used to approve a larger project.	16.7%	88
Other community goals should be considered such as:		56
	answered question	526
	skipped question	74

This question provides a chance for survey respondents to state their preferences for different community identified goals through a list that was generated during stakeholder meetings. The top three responses reflect the way in which people interact with buildings and enhance community character reflected in: open or green spaces, pedestrian enhancements and projects that incorporate and rehabilitate a historic building into the project. These three goals received the most support in the survey. Sustainable structures, affordable housing and mixed-use development projects also received a strong level of support. The Affordable housing and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) sustainability standards are often used to justify additional development potential in projects. Almost 17% of respondents were not supportive of any of the stated community goals being used as a trade off for a larger project.

The next question focuses on the minimum development standards for new construction. In the CBD zoning areas a decision was made in 2005 to amend the UDO to require that new construction be built at two-stories as a **minimum** height. This was done after analyzing the limited area for redevelopment and recognizing that the tax base of the City is enhanced with taller structures and because upper floors can be used for residents and offices. Aside from the two sections of CBD zoning along Haywood Road no other zoning district requires a two-story minimum at this time.

Central Business District zoned areas of the corridor have the 'two-story minimum' requirement when new buildings are constructed. (Zoning maps showing existing zoning districts can be found at www.ashevillenc.gov/progress and clicking on the Haywood Road Vision Plan link.) Except for specific situations, would it be a good idea to require newly constructed buildings along Haywood Road to be two stories tall as a minimum? This would provide space above the ground floor for office, residential and other uses and supports sustainable development goals and benefits.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A two-story minimum is a good idea.	73.5%	380
A two-story minimum is not a good idea.	26.5%	137
answered question		517
skipped question		00

The responses were strongly in favor of requiring two-story structures along Haywood Road because the area above the first floor that can be put to a variety of uses such as office space or residential use. A similar question was asked during the preference survey conducted in 2006 and at that time 68% of respondents supported a two-story requirement. To balance out this discussion there may be some uses that could be incompatible with a second story use because of odor, noise or general character of the use such as gasoline sales, car washes, automobile repair etc. This will have to be considered as proposals are generated for the corridor. The commercial corridor is only a single-parcel deep in most locations as has already been noted so there are limited areas available for redevelopment. The commercial growth is also constrained to a degree to limit negative impacts onto the residential areas by using setbacks and landscape buffers. Sustainable goals of the City are aligned for denser commercial development along corridors to support multi-modal transportation and pedestrian movement. A two-story requirement will leverage greater investment from the limited land resources along Haywood Road. Expansions and renovations that support the preservation of existing one-story buildings will also be permitted as an exception to the two-story requirement as has already been described under the Historic Preservation section. The next question of the survey was focused on pedestrian oriented details of the building and site.

Successful pedestrian districts have design characteristics that set them apart from more suburban districts such as:

- buildings placed directly behind a wider sidewalk with benches, street trees, bike racks, trash cans, etc;
- building features such as store front windows and front door access directly from the sidewalk;
- building requirements that match portions of new buildings with nearby structures;
- parking lots located to the side or rear of the building with managed driveway curb cuts;
- quality open space such as pocket parks, plazas and outside dining areas;
- bus stops and bike facilities supporting transportation options

Question: Would you support design standards for new construction to enhance the pedestrian environment and walkability of the corridor?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I would support some standards to support pedestrian districts.	96.8%	513
No, I would not support standards to support pedestrian districts.	3.2%	17
<i>answered question</i>		530

More pedestrians are using Haywood Road as time goes on and ensuring pedestrian-oriented development is crucial. To make the area more pedestrian oriented will take a cooperative effort between the community, developers and the City and State. CBD zoned areas are required to provide specific building orientation and design features to encourage pedestrian access and interest along the street. This includes placing new buildings directly behind the sidewalk as a standard or allowing setbacks for specific uses such as plazas, outside dining space or a grassy green in the case of a church or residential building. Buildings in the CBD are required to place windows, doors and other openings at pedestrian level along the front facade of the building to provide interest to the building and enhance the relationship to the sidewalk. The entire corridor could benefit from these types of design standards that are in place for the CBD areas. Over time the public and private sectors will need to coordinate efforts to furnish street trees, benches, trash cans and bike racks to create a positive pedestrian environment like the sidewalk improvements in downtown. For the majority of parcels along Haywood Road, parking lots already are required to be placed to the side or rear of the primary structure and not located between the street and the building through the existing zoning along a majority of the corridor. About two-thirds of the existing parking lots are placed to the side or rear and conform to this standard. The location of parking is one of the simplest requirements that can improve the pedestrian environment. Access to poorly designed parking lots can make pedestrian movement confusing and even dangerous because of conflicts with cars coming and

going to a property. As new parking lots are added and older lots are redesigned this situation will improve.

Managing the automobile traffic onto a site is an important consideration for all aspects of site development. Drive-through facilities have been the object of much discussion about appropriateness along Haywood Road. Depending on the layout, sites with drive-through lanes need wider driveway openings to manage the flow of traffic into the site. In addition, more of the site is given to travel lanes, drive-through lanes and bypass lanes so that the majority of the site is often covered by travel lanes. There is sensitivity about this issue along Haywood Road so a question was included to gauge community interest in drive-through facilities.

Drive-through windows can provide convenience to business patrons but can create problems for neighboring residents and pedestrians using the street. Question: What type of businesses if any, should be allowed to provide drive-through bays on Haywood Road? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Banking	50.8%	270
Prescription drug pick-up	27.3%	145
Restaurant service	10.7%	57
Commercial uses	5.5%	29
Prefer no drive-throughs	51.4%	273
answered question		531
skipped question		69

From the responses certain uses garnered more support than others for drive-through facilities. Bank related drive-throughs received the most support because of their convenience, safety concerns after-hours and late-night access to money that many people have grown accustomed to. A slightly larger percentage of survey takers preferred no drive-throughs at all. There is also the convenience factor perhaps especially when a person is sick to use a drive-through to pick up a prescription at a drug store. There are three drive-through facilities associated with financial institutions present on Haywood Road and they are allowed currently in all of the commercial zoning districts found on the corridor. The impacts of this use can be managed through design requirements as noted in the next question:

If drive-through bays are allowed for businesses along Haywood Road, should certain design considerations be included to minimize their impacts? (Existing drive-through facilities would be exempt from any new regulations if adopted.) Please select design standards if any for drive-through bays.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Placement of drive-through bay to the side or rear of the main structure.	76.9%	389
Limit the number of drive-through bays.	69.2%	350
Limit the maximum volume of speakers and control light		

Clearly special design considerations can be required for the corridor in order to minimize impacts and ensure safety. Screening the drive-through facilities to mitigate the impacts of the use to residential neighbors should also be an important consideration.

Review of the Table of Uses

There is support among west Asheville residents to maintain a wide range of commercial uses along Haywood Road because it serves a broad neighborhood area and maintaining convenient access to services and local jobs is important. This list of uses corresponds to general use categories that have already been described under the existing zoning. Heavy Industrial and some light industrial uses are inappropriate along the corridor because of the size of the roadway and the close proximity to residential areas which could be negatively impacted by the effects of the industrial use. Other light manufacturing uses may be appropriate though especially when smoke, fumes or noise can be abated. Some uses along the corridor are important to continue from a neighborhood standpoint, but because of particular customary modes of operation, do not lend themselves to mixed-use buildings or sites (for gas stations or auto repair businesses for example). In these circumstances a special exception to building design standards may be warranted.

Meeting Notes pertaining to building form and placement:

1. Buildings placed close to the street encourage pedestrian activity
2. Mixed-use buildings preferred; encourage residential uses on upper floors
3. Corridor has a lot of repair businesses for auto and machinery that should be retained
4. Maintain variety in building forms so it is not a cookie-cutter design palate
5. Flexibility in front setbacks to encourage courtyard spaces
6. Side setbacks or rear setbacks may be places to gain and retain green space (could also affect streetscape character)
7. Taller buildings may have trade-offs for additional setbacks
8. Concern about light trespass from commercial to residential areas
9. Character around Beechams Curve down to the river is not like most of the corridor
10. Recent CBD amendments provide some useful precedents for design concepts and buffers adjacent to residential parcels based on scale of development
11. Mixed-use and higher density development supports transit ridership

12. Encourage/ allow a range of business uses to be sure that every-day needs are met on the corridor.

Recommendations and Strategies:

1. Develop an overlay for the sections of the corridor except the existing two CBD zoned areas to focus development in ways that meet City-adopted strategic goals: pedestrian oriented development, development to leverage investment, support for the tax base; increase residential densities to support the transit system and economic goals of the corridor.
2. As the UDO is amended over time, ensure that an overlay along Haywood Road continues to be preferred over rezoning the corridor to an appropriate new zoning district.
3. Participate in development incentive ordinances to include the priorities supported in the development preferences survey completed in 2011 and identified by the Vision Plan.
4. Create design standards like the ones used in the requirements for the *CBD* zoned areas which include pedestrian oriented development, fenestration along the street, street wall development, incentives to encourage historic preservation and multi-family housing.
5. Acknowledge the historic variety of building setbacks along the corridor by providing setback options that can be used for incentives for green areas and open space in new construction.
6. Designate limited opportunities for drive-through facilities for financial institutions and adopt specific design criteria to mitigate negative impacts to the corridor and the surrounding neighbors. This type of facility could be designated for City Council review and approval so that negative impacts can be carefully considered.
7. Mitigate development impacts on residential areas adjacent to commercial development along the corridor.
8. Encourage the creation of additional usable green space along Haywood Road such as plaza areas and parks as a trade-off for additional development potential.
9. Set a standard for height for the non-CBD zoned areas and provide opportunities to exceed the height by one story for example with approval by City Council for projects that include community supported goals.
10. Require new buildings to be built at two-stories to meet City adopted goals, encourage mixed-use development and leverage the investment along the corridor. Allow expansions and renovations of historic one-story structures as a tool to preserve historic buildings and community character.
11. Direct new development that is inconsistent to the identified goals of the Haywood Road Vision Plan to other corridors that are more suitable for the particular style of

development. For example direct big-box development to locations along Patton Avenue so that pedestrian character along Haywood Road is preserved.

12. Ensure a buffer between commercial uses and residential neighbors that is sized to correspond to the height of the development and the impacts of the use.

Economic Development Issues

Ideas to support business development and create a diversified local economy were the primary discussion points during the Vision Plan meetings. Haywood Road has seen a number of new businesses start-ups during the past 10 years. Although some retail establishments have closed, a number of restaurants and new businesses have opened creating a general impression of optimism about the local economy. The growth in new restaurants, bars and nightclubs along Haywood Road has made it the center of dining and entertainment on the west side of the French Broad River. West Asheville has a long history of advocacy by the business community in the form of the West Asheville Business Association (WABA) which has been around for over 50 years. WABA is in a position to act as a voice for developing the local economy in west Asheville. Members of WABA have been actively involved in the development of the Haywood Road Vision Plan.

The economy of Haywood Road is diverse with a wide array of businesses interests. There are at least 200 business concerns of varying sizes located along Haywood Road between the French Broad River and Patton Avenue. Of these, there are at least 43 **retail** locations selling everything from groceries to fabric and furniture. For the most part, these retail businesses are locally owned and based on Haywood Road. This entrepreneurial spirit and 'can-do' attitude positively affects the quality of life in west Asheville. There are also at least 25 food and beverage establishments and in addition to that number, 5 taverns. The number of venues for food and beverages has expanded in the past decade and based on the community preference survey completed in 2011, there is interest for additional restaurants especially for those serving ethnic cuisine. There are 33 different types of office-businesses along the corridor providing a wide range of services: insurance, designers, attorneys and accountants among many others. These offices range in size from one or two people to large offices. There are also a number of businesses that service automobiles (15), a variety construction contractors providing services in different trades (9) and commercial businesses that operate for the entire City with their business but are located along Haywood Road (15). These types of businesses are generally local start-ups and a number of them have a large number of employees. The corridor has a diverse and strong economy and all actions concerning the corridor need to protect the economic health of the corridor and remove barriers to growing the local economy.

Survey questions regarding the local economy:

The survey undertaken in 2011 asked this question: "What type of new business would you support along Haywood Road that is not currently located there." The answers are interesting and give a glimpse of what people feel is missing on the corridor and provides ideas for business start-ups for entrepreneurs (see the full list of answers in the attachment at the end of

this report). The most requested business is *hardware store* which was mentioned 48 times by survey takers. The Ace Hardware Store on Merrimon Avenue has been mentioned as a model for the type of hardware store people are interested in ; characterized as mid-scale and conveniently located. There is also interest in specialty retail that might include anything from specialty groceries, crafts and hobbies, clothing, books and a plant nursery and these types of things were mentioned over 150 times. Additional local pharmacies were also mentioned 19 times by survey takers. There were a large number of requests (88) for additional restaurants of all types, especially ethnic restaurants. As was mentioned before in this report, there are about 25 food and beverage establishments located along Haywood Road. There appears to be broad support for additional offerings for food and beverage along Haywood Road and most of the existing restaurants are locally owned facilities. This supports the Asheville Chamber of Commerce' effort to promote Asheville's '*Foodtopia*' brand to the traveling public. Regarding specific ethnic cuisine, Japanese food was called out most frequently in the survey followed by Ethiopian, Indian, Asian, Thai and Middle-eastern cuisine. There were a number of requests which for a lack of a better heading are characterized as '*community-oriented businesses*' which includes movie theaters, music venues, community and teen centers a bowling alley and a live theater venue as well as additional park space. Finally, aside from a miscellaneous list of specific businesses another category that was mentioned is lodging facilities. One survey taker mentioned that they need a place for the in-laws to stay while they are visiting. Besides a single hostel, there are no other lodging facilities along Haywood Road.

One noticeable change along the corridor is the retreat of general practitioner medical care mainly because the Western North Carolina Community Health Services' Minnie Jones Clinic moved from west Asheville to downtown Asheville into a building owned by Buncombe County. There are still a number of dentists and optometrists along the corridor as well as alternative medicine and acupuncture. An urgent care facility is located along Patton Avenue so that limited health care option is available to residents of west Asheville.

Special Concern: Parking Challenges along the corridor

During the discussions for the Vision Plan the lack of sufficient parking has been cited as a major limitation for economic development along the corridor. Even while there appears to be a parking space shortage, there are a large number of parking lots which are tied to specific uses along the corridor that with careful coordination could share their parking spaces during 'off' hours. The uses with the additional parking spaces include churches, daytime office uses and other daytime and weekday business activities. Strategies can be explored for the City or other entity to operate and manage the parking lots to provide the needed parking. The high costs of parking decks make them almost prohibitive as a practical alternative to existing surface lots which represent an available and underutilized resource along Haywood Road.

There has been some discussion about removing the parking requirements for commercial properties along Haywood Road entirely, in a similar way that the two CBD sections along Haywood Road are now exempted from off-street parking requirements. The vision plan committee recognizes the benefit of reducing the barriers to investment and business expansion to the commercial health of the corridor but is concerned about a parking

exemption. An option may be to reduce the number of parking spaces required for developments especially when only a very small number of off-street parking spaces are needed. Larger projects could get a reduction too but because of their larger potential impacts should provide some spaces for their patrons. The concern with a full or partial off-street parking exemption is that the residential side streets could take the brunt of the parking overflow. In some cases the residential streets are under-equipped to handle the additional parking and corridor patrons block driveways and travel lanes because they may be unfamiliar with the flow of the street.

During the discussion about the need for shared parking an unexpected problem was mentioned: there is a growing problem with towing from private lots when patrons from other businesses park in “available” lots along Haywood Road. While there is a rightful need to reserve parking for the business’s patrons, there can be confusion for visitors in general about where to find legal parking. There is a special ordinance covering the downtown CBD area and Biltmore Village that requires signage on a parking lot if the owners intend to tow away non-business customers which includes information about fees and a number to call to retrieve towed vehicles. There are no signage notification requirements like this in west Asheville at this time. This was mentioned as a needed amendment to the City ordinance to cover this requirement. The existing ordinance covering towing signage was written and passed in 2003 and at that time there were noted problems with predatory towing in the downtown CBD and Biltmore Village which was negatively affecting the reputations of these two areas as friendly places to visit. In some ways it also points to the growing popularity of the area with more businesses and a density of uses that is generating the shortage of parking spaces.

Economic development meeting notes:

1. Identify tools to encourage business ownership and business expansion
2. Maintain affordable commercial rental spaces
3. Centralized parking options are needed: park and walk at key locations
4. Identify locations and encourage business incubator spaces by creating small spaces for start-up businesses; this could be mandated in new construction especially in mixed-use buildings
5. Expand signage for wayfinding
6. Gateways should be made attractive where lacking
7. Sustainability Bonus for affordable housing and green building
8. Encourage/ allow a range of commercial uses to be sure that every-day needs of residents are met on the corridor.
9. Consider zoning regulation changes to ensure a mix of uses even on a single site.
10. Home occupation rules which allow only a portion of the home (25% currently) to be used for a home-based business, consider expanding the % of the area in the home since west Asheville generally has smaller bungalows.
11. Maintain and expand the pedestrian components of the streetscape which supports small businesses, increases bus ridership and the overall viability of the corridor.
12. Make greater allowances for live-work units and residential units along the corridor

Recommendations and Strategies:

1. Initiate a parking lot sharing program along the corridor focusing initially on churches and eventually including businesses with excess capacity or daytime and weekday hours that would be willing to share their parking lots to support community businesses.
2. Consider ordinance changes that would reduce or eliminate the requirement for off-street parking spaces for business (already in place for the Central Business District) to remove a hurdle to additional investment and encourage new businesses along Haywood Road. This could operate along with the shared parking program for the corridor.
3. Encourage business incubation spaces for start-up businesses at affordable rates; this may be a part of an incentive during the review of larger mixed-use projects that may be proposed for the corridor which had support in the 2011 community preference survey.
4. Expand the *wayfinding* signage program to additional areas surrounding west Asheville and improve the gateway features to the neighborhood.
5. Develop effective marketing programs for businesses along Haywood Road. This may be a program lead by WABA.
6. Incentivize green building and affordable housing projects which may include the ability to build larger structures or taller structures if community goals are met.
7. Streetscape improvements and burying the overhead power lines could positively influence the economic vitality of Haywood Road. This economic development strategy was successfully implemented in downtown Asheville on many streets.
8. Haywood Road community events should be developed to promote the area.
9. Allow for the growth in light manufacturing or light industrial uses along the corridor so long as the negative impacts may be mitigated for the neighboring area. Specific approval processes may be necessary to ensure compatibility with the corridor goals.
10. Enact a wording amendment to the City Code of Ordinances to require signage in parking lots where the owners will tow unauthorized vehicles using the lot; this will make it clear to patrons frequenting Haywood Road businesses.

Safety Concerns

Safety concerns are generally related to apprehension about theft and violent crime to sufficient and consistent facilities along the corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles. Crime concerns have gone down as a whole along the Haywood Road corridor. Compared to comments at community meetings from years past, the feeling of safety among individuals have increased. This can be attributed at least in part to additional ‘eyes on the street’ which has come about through business expansion along the corridor that is generating more pedestrian activity and general vitality to the corridor. Last summer there was concern about a number of home break-ins in the neighborhoods of west Asheville and some frustration about communication about the problem and what was being done to pursue the criminals. Social media has played an active part in increasing communication among neighborhood residents. West Asheville Watch, a page on Facebook has over 1,500 friends who have signed up for updates from neighbors. At first, members of the group met in person to learn more about the

break-in activity, but now most communication is from postings on the page about suspicious activity or the occasional lost pet. The use of social media has evolved to be a helpful and accessible tool to communicate effectively with neighbors and neighborhoods in a timely fashion about important topics.

Safety concerns for pedestrian and bicyclists along the corridor has risen as the area experiences growth in business activity, additional pedestrian business destinations and the expansion of bicycle commuting. As was noted in a study by Shannon Cappezelli and Philip Kleisler entitled *Key Indicators for the Haywood Road Corridor*, fully 36% of the length of the corridor is made up of drive-way curb-cuts. Some drive-way cuts are continuous and allow cars to pass into a parking lot from any location along the frontage area. This is a potentially dangerous situation for pedestrians, bicyclists and for other auto drivers because the movement into the parcel is not easy to anticipate when it is not managed at a single location. When access is allowed anywhere on the parcel accidents or near misses with cars and other travelers is a possibility. Most other functioning streets have driveway curb-cuts at much more modest amounts. For example the section of Charlotte Street from I-240 to Clyde Street has about 25% of the length in driveway curb cuts. Also the section of Merrimon Avenue from I-240 to Hillside Street has about 24% of the roadway in curb-cuts. Both of these sections of roadway are in older commercial areas and more modern streets developed with proper driveway management should have a smaller percentage of curb-cuts. There are also a number of obstructions in the sidewalk especially from power line poles that make everyday travel challenging for people using wheelchairs and strollers. Crosswalks and pedestrian signals occur in some areas of the corridor and are especially helpful navigating busy intersections. There are quite a number of needs in the sidewalk zone as was pointed in the 2011, *Haywood Road Pedestrian and Safety Audit* which was completed by bicycling enthusiasts and neighborhood volunteers.

Meeting notes pertaining to crime and safety:

1. Positive effect of more eyes on the street with new businesses and more pedestrians
2. Less concern about physical or verbal harassment for pedestrians along the corridor
3. Pedestrian safety concern near 240 crossing, and Patton access points (incl. Louisiana Avenue)
4. Need additional crosswalks and pedestrian lights at important intersections
5. Reduce business curb-cuts along the corridor and construct sidewalks at the locations of the 'continuous' curb cuts to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists and the functionality of the roadway
6. Pedestrian and cyclist safety: Lack of pedestrian facilities especially crossing I-240; the large number of curb cuts which fail to define the pedestrian realm from the auto realm; limited street cross-walks at a number of intersections

Recommendations and Strategies:

1. Consider the *Haywood Road Pedestrian and Safety Audit* and use it to identify and prioritize locations for pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian signals. Better pedestrian facilities encourages walking and more people on the street makes the entire area safer.
2. Support for Haywood Road to be a case study for street and sidewalk improvements to include multi-modal transportation options consistent the Complete Streets Policy adopted by the City of Asheville in 2012.
3. Continue the efforts of social media sources to communicate to neighbors and neighborhoods when crimes occur or to report unusual neighborhood activity.
4. Promote the Asheville Police Department program for business and home owners where community resource officers can perform an on-site safety audit to identify crime targets to deter crime on parcels and against businesses.
5. Identify funding sources that focus on improving sidewalk sections and reducing the length and number of driveway curb-cuts to improve safety and traffic flow.
6. Continue efforts to reduce graffiti and make use of community service volunteers to remove it.

Neighborhood Related Topics *Draft*

Neighborhood Topics

Narrative Background and Important Issues

A number of characteristics of West Asheville mentioned in the Introduction to this document deserve to be highlighted here to bring the Neighborhood Topics section into focus. West Asheville is an area of younger families who have located to west Asheville because the quality of life is high and the homes are often more affordable than other parts of Asheville. As was noted before the median age of the population in west Asheville is 34 compared to 38 for the rest of the city. These younger families have safety concerns and represent a need (or an opportunity) to encourage more retail stores that support families and the maintenance of dwellings. The compactness of traditional neighborhoods along the corridor encourages an active lifestyle and therefore by all accounts pedestrian activity and bicycle ridership are both up along Haywood Road. The compactness of the neighborhood also means that the residential uses are in close proximity to the commercial activity. The younger population coupled with a higher population density and the interface between neighborhoods and the business district has perhaps heightened an awareness of the interconnectedness of systems and life along the Corridor, thus helping to explain the overall ethic of sustainability that emerged as a priority (85.6% of respondents or 489 people) in the 2011 Haywood Road Vision Plan survey.

Also noted in the Introduction to this Vision Plan, is that West Asheville has developed an array of neighborhoods, all of which were designed with access mainly from Haywood Road. A list of these neighborhoods (roughly from west to east) includes Horney Heights, Falconhurst, Horneyhurst, Bruceмонт Circle, Virginia Avenue, Burton Street Community, Westwood Place,

West Asheville Estates, Pisgah View, Hall Fletcher, & French Broad Terrace. These neighborhoods are demographically diverse in age, ethnic origin, race, and degrees of affluence, contributing to the distinctive character and richness of West Asheville. Put another way, the varied characteristics of these West Asheville neighborhoods have to a large degree determined the Haywood Road Corridor brand in West Asheville. And it must be said that with 76.3% of those responding to the 2011 Haywood Road Vision Plan survey self-identifying as residents who live on or near Haywood Road, the results of this survey truly represent a grassroots community effort to further shape the corridor in ways that serve the neighborhoods.

Although there was no Haywood Road Vision Plan meeting devoted specifically to Neighborhood Topics, neighborhood issues regularly arose in meetings as they were related to other aspects of the Haywood Road Vision Plan and can be seen to grow directly out of the characteristics of these West Asheville neighborhoods and their patterns of growth. There is a powerful sense from west Asheville residents that there is a lot that they can do themselves even as they identify things that seem to be beyond their direct responsibility:

- The need for additional crosswalks and pedestrian signals along Haywood Road at important intersections (*i.e.*, Patton, Brevard Road, Louisiana, the 5-points at State Street, where Haywood Road crosses I-240, Westwood, as highlighted from the 2011 survey about the need for better walkability in West Asheville: “Would you support design standards for new construction to enhance the pedestrian environment and walkability of the corridor?” 96.8% (513) of 2011 survey respondents said, “Yes, I would support some standards to support pedestrian districts.”
- Some need for additional open space and/or green space, judging by the 2011 survey result: “Would you be supportive of allowing additional building size or building height if the proposal was assisting the community's identified goals?” 64.8% (341): Publicly accessible open/green space if included in the project.
- The hope of seeing more retail stores of a practical nature such as a hardware store, grocery store and pharmacies to support families, reflected in the 2011 survey where 56.1% endorsed this as part of their vision for Haywood Road.
- Some need for places to assemble and to play and a community venue: Among the desired businesses (the last question in the 2011 survey), respondents mentioned these places:
 - Tutoring center; multipurpose center; incl. pool
 - Park space -- dog park; community gardens
 - Movie theatre – ‘Fine Arts’ scale; first or second run
 - Theatre space -- Family friendly; small facility; activities and parties; classes
 - Outdoor dining – including play area for kids ...
 - Bookstore -- Covers new and used; have readings; could include café
- The importance of preserving affordable housing and neighborhood diversity surfaced early in the initial working list of corridor topics.

- The desire to address issues that arise because of the close proximity between neighborhoods and businesses along Haywood Road. These include:
 - Cut-through traffic, parking shortages which results in parking along neighborhood side streets
 - Impacts of commercial uses on neighborhood areas such as buffers and screening plantings, light trespass, noise
 - Cut through movement for vehicles avoiding Haywood Road speeding in residential areas
- Neighborhood organizations could sponsor walks to the business corridor to reduce parking and traffic congestion.
- Hold local west Asheville history events: story-telling, photo exhibits, plaques on historic buildings and homes as a response to the idea that historic preservation is sustainable.
- Story telling sessions to capture the history of the community (make available on 'youtube' or the history portal being developed for Asheville and special district signage could bring the past to life for current residents.
- Identify special buildings – or building sites where no longer extant with a special historic plaque and the locations of particular historic homes -- in the neighborhoods.
- Home Occupation: Special zoning rules for home occupations limit the area of the home used to 25% and with smaller homes in the west Asheville, this may put additional burden on the use and limit small business incubation.
- Sustainability Bonus: This is the opportunity that may be afforded a developer who incorporates affordable housing and green building techniques within an 1/8 distance of the corridor to design for expanded density or enlarge the scale of building. The suggestion was made to offer that bonus on residential properties in close proximity to the corridor since they may be good candidates for higher density development and/or limited commercial uses. As a related comment, it was suggested that we consider requesting the expansion of the City adopted sustainability bonus from 1/8 of a mile to ¼ mile.
- Survey respondents noted that the presence of additional businesses (specifically the DeSoto Lounge & Blue Ribbon building, and also in the Dry Goods/Spagnola Studio building) as well as more people on the streets generally makes the corridor feel much safer. This is the definition of the 'eyes on the street' concept.
- There is strong support for entrepreneurial endeavors for west Asheville residents which includes considering additional uses and changes to the rules for home occupations already mentioned, and studying how churches along the corridor may be able to fill a niche for entrepreneurial efforts by sharing their commercial kitchens, sharing office space or using classroom space for daycares or smaller schools such as a charter school.

- Neighborhoods have a stake in the ideas and implementation of the Vision Plan and neighborhood associations have valuable perspectives and will be able to partner to help implement the plan.
- Consider a west Asheville commission and / or encourage residents to apply for the Neighborhood Commission recently chartered by the City Council

Recommendations and Strategies Neighborhood Related Issues:

1. Streetscape concerns are important for neighborhood access; 98% of survey takers support design standards that encourage pedestrian access and connectivity in building and site development
2. Special signage for different neighborhoods and the two historic districts could also encourage walking.
3. History projects are important to capture the stories of the past and could include story-telling; photo projects, history walking ‘trails’
4. Pursue efforts to partner with churches to share their parking lots to help the parking overflow problem that is happening along side streets in the neighborhoods
5. Buffer commercial impacts including noise, building height and setbacks, sound, etc into the residential areas. This may include rules for quiet hours for businesses along the corridor.
6. Maintain business diversity and expand services that include neighborhood and family services. Entertainment venues for families were popularly mentioned as ‘needed’ along the corridor. A local hardware store was the most commonly referenced specific business that is missing along the corridor.
7. Identify partners to grow local businesses (example, churches sometimes have underutilized buildings, office space and kitchens that could be shared for business uses)
8. Green space along Haywood Road is needed and could be a part of the important community trade-offs when development is proposed (68% said that this would be a community supported goal during the survey). Other green spaces may take the form of greenways that would link points along Haywood Road to other park areas.
9. Speeding in residential areas needs to be monitored and traffic calming measures should be studied on a case by case basis.
10. A neighborhood coalition could be organized with a variety of duties such as safety watches, or ‘welcome wagons’ for new residents.
11. General cleanliness and unwanted vegetation in specific locations is a concern and as well as on-going need for graffiti removal. Awareness and education for property owners may be needed.